

What is claimed is:

1. An adjustable pipe wrench, comprising:

a slide bar having a gripping portion;

an upper jaw mounted to the slide bar;

a lower jaw, slidably mounted on the slide bar, said lower jaw having a lower portion extending toward the gripping portion; and

a brake lever, pivotally mounted on a portion of the lower jaw and spring-biased against said lower jaw,

wherein a user may adjust a position of the lower jaw on the slide bar by actuating said lever and moving said lower jaw relative to said slide bar.

2. The wrench of Claim 1, wherein the lower jaw is movable freely toward the upper jaw when the lever is engaged, and movable freely toward and away from the upper jaw when the lever is disengaged.

3. The wrench of Claim 1, further comprising a spring mounted between the upper jaw and the slide bar, and wherein the upper jaw is pivotally mounted to the slide bar.

4. The wrench of Claim 1, wherein a portion of the lever extends longitudinally, and substantially the same length toward the gripping portion as the lower jaw extends longitudinally toward the gripping portion.

5. The wrench of Claim 1, wherein the lever has an operation portion angled so it extends generally parallel to the slide bar.

6. The wrench of Claim 1, wherein the lower jaw has a thumb-resting portion to facilitate movement by a thumb of an operator.

7. The wrench of Claim 1, wherein the lever has an orifice for slidably mounting around the slide bar.

8. The wrench of Claim 1, wherein the slide bar further comprises a ratcheting mechanism, said ratcheting mechanism including a surface of the brake lever and teeth on a surface of the slide bar.

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9. The wrench of Claim 8, wherein the ratcheting mechanism advances said lower jaw toward said upper jaw in increments.

10. The wrench of Claim 1, further comprising gripping surfaces on the upper jaw and lower jaw.

11. The wrench of Claim 1, wherein the upper jaw is pivotally mounted to the slide bar.

12. An adjustable hand clamp, comprising:  
a slide bar having a gripping portion;  
an upper jaw mounted to the slide bar;  
a lower jaw, slidably mounted on the slide bar, said lower jaw having a first portion extending toward the upper jaw and a second portion extending in an opposite direction toward the gripping portion; and  
a brake lever, pivotally mounted on one of said portions of the lower jaw and spring-biased against said second portion of the lower jaw,  
wherein a user adjusts a position of the lower jaw on the slide, by repositioning the lower jaw with a thumb.

13. The clamp of Claim 12, wherein the lower jaw is subject to motion toward the upper jaw when the lever is engaged, and is subject to motion to and from the upper jaw when the lever is disengaged.

14. The clamp of Claim 12, wherein the upper jaw is pivotally mounted to the slide bar.

15. The clamp of Claim 14, further comprising a spring mounted between the upper jaw and the slide bar.

16. The clamp of Claim 12, wherein a portion of the lever extends longitudinally, and substantially the same length toward the gripping portion as the lower jaw extends longitudinally toward the gripping portion.

17. The clamp of Claim 12, wherein the lever has an orifice for slidably mounting around the slide bar.

18. The clamp of Claim 12, wherein the slide bar further comprises a ratcheting mechanism, said ratcheting mechanism including a surface of the brake lever and teeth on a surface of the slide bar.

19. The clamp of Claim 18, wherein the ratcheting mechanism advances said lower jaw toward said upper jaw in increments.

20. The clamp of Claim 12, further comprising gripping surfaces on the upper jaw and lower jaw.

21. A method of grasping an object with one hand using an adjustable hand tool having a brake lever, the method comprising:

providing the object and the hand tool;

gripping the hand tool with one hand;

adjusting a gap between jaws of the hand tool with the same hand, using a lower jaw of the hand tool; and grasping the object.

22. The method of Claim 21, further comprising disengaging a brake lever of the hand tool, the brake lever extending substantially the same longitudinally as a lower jaw of the hand tool; and engaging the brake lever of the hand tool.

23. The method of Claim 21, further comprising tightening a grasp on the object, urging a pivotally-mounted upper jaw and a moving lower jaw to grasp the object more tightly, wherein the hand partially rotates the hand tool about the object and presses the lower jaw toward the upper jaw.

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24. An adjustable pipe wrench, comprising:

a slide bar having a gripping portion;

an upper jaw mounted to the slide bar;

a lower jaw, slidably mounted on the slide bar, said lower jaw having a first portion extending toward the upper jaw and a second portion extending in an opposite direction toward the gripping portion; and

a brake lever, pivotally mounted on the lower jaw and spring-biased on a second portion of the lower jaw,

wherein the brake lever and the slide bar form a bar-engaging mechanism, and a user may open the jaws with a thumb, disengaging the brake lever from the slide bar and urging the lower jaw away from the upper jaw.

25. The adjustable wrench of claim 24, wherein the user closes the jaws of the wrench by pushing the lower jaw toward the upper jaw with the thumb.

26. The adjustable wrench of Claim 24, wherein the bar-engaging mechanism further comprises teeth on a surface of the slide bar, wherein the brake lever engages the teeth and prevents opening the jaws.

27. The adjustable wrench of Claim 24, further comprising a spring mounted between the upper jaw and the slide bar.

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